

# Sama language

The **Sama language**, *Sinama* (*Sama* + the *infix* *-in-*; also known as Bahasa Bajau), is the language of Sama-Bajau people of the Sulu Archipelago, Philippines; Sabah, Malaysia and parts of Indonesia.<sup>[3]</sup> The Sama are one of the most widely dispersed peoples in Southeast Asia.

Contents
<b>Classification</b>
Dialects
<b>Distribution</b>
<b>Phonology</b>
Consonants
Vowels
Stress
Enclitic Pronouns
<b>Cultural references</b>
<b>References</b>

## Classification

The *Ethnologue* divides Sinama into 7 languages based on mutual intelligibility. The 7 Sinama languages are Northern Sinama, Central Sinama, Southern Sinama, Sinama Pangutaran from the island of Pangutaran off of Jolo island, Mapun, Bajau West Coast of Sabah and Bajau Indonesia. Jama Mapun, a language from the island of Mapun, formerly known as Cagayan de Sulu, is a related language and sometimes also referred to as Sinama. These classifications are rarely recognized by Sama themselves who instead classify their Sinama by the village or island it originates from. The emic classification of a Sama person's language e.g. Silumpak, Laminusa, Tabawan generally form the different dialects of the 7 Sinama or Bajau languages.

## Dialects

Sama	
Bajau	
<i>Sinama</i>	
Native to	Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia
Region	Tawi-Tawi and neighboring islands of the Sulu Archipelago (Sibutu, Siasi), Darvel Bay north coast of Sabah and some part of Indonesia
Ethnicity	Sama-Bajau
Native speakers	410,000 (2000–2007) <sup>[1]</sup>
Language family	Austronesian <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Malayo-Polynesian<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sama–Bajaw<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Sama</b></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul>
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	Variously: <div>ssb – Southern Sama</div> <div>sm1 – Central Sama</div> <div>sse – Balangingi Sama</div> <div>s1m – Pangutaran Sama</div>
Glottolog	inne1244 ( <span>http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/inne1244</span> ) <sup>[2]</sup>



The Sinama speakers of Semporna, Malaysia are known as Bajau. This Bajau woman wears "borak" the traditional sun protection.



Rowing out from Tinutu' Village, a Sama village outside of Sulu where several Central Sinama dialects are spoken. Most notably Sinama Musu' and Sinama Silumpak.

Northern Sinama	Central Sinama	Southern Sinama	Sinama Pangutaran	Sinama Mapun	Bajau West Coast Sabah	Bajau Indonesia
Tagtabun Balangingi'	Sama Kaulungan	Simunul	Pangutaran		Kota Belud	Torosiaje
Tonquil Balangingi'	Sama Dilaut	Sibutu'	Ubian (North)		Tuaran	
Linungan	Musu'	Tandubas			Kudat	
Panigayan Balangingi'	Laminusa	Sitangkai			Pitas	
Landang-Gua'	Balimbing	Ubian (South)				
Sama Daongdong	Bannaran	Languyan				
Kawit Balangingi'	Bangaw-Bangaw	Sapa-Sapa				
Karundung	Tabawan	Bongao/Sanga-Sanga/Pahut				
Pilas	Manubal	Berau East Kalimantan				
	Silumpak					
	Kabinga'an					

The following list of Sama dialects is from *Ethnologue*, with some additions from Pallesen (1985) (individual languages with separately assigned ISO codes highlighted in **bold**; locations and speaker populations are from Pallesen (1985:45-50)<sup>[4]</sup>):

- **Inabaknon**: Capul Island, off the coast of northwestern Samar, central Philippines
- **Yakan**: eastern Basilan Island, southern Zamboanga Peninsula. 60,000 speakers.
  - *Northern Yakan*:<sup>[4]</sup> northern part of eastern Basilan Island
  - *Southern Yakan*:<sup>[4]</sup> southern part of eastern Basilan Island
- **Pangutaran Sama**(*Western Sulu Sama* branch)
  - *Sama Pangutaran*:<sup>[4]</sup> Pangutaran Island, 50 km northwest of Jolo City. 12,000 speakers. some live in Palawan
  - *Sama Ubian*:<sup>[4]</sup> North Ubian Island, a few miles southwest of Pangutaran. 2,000 speakers. Also called *a'a ubian*, *a'a sowang buna'* 'people of Buna' channel'.
- *Inner Sulu Sama* branch
  - **Northern Sama** (*Northern Sulu* in Pallesen (1985))
    - *Lutangan (Lutango)*: mainland of Mindanao opposite Olutanga Island
    - *Sibuco-Vitali (Sibuku')*: inland area across the Zamboanga Peninsula, 50 km north of Zamboanga City. 11,000 speakers. Also called *sama bitali'*, *sama nawan*.
    - *Sibuguey (Batuan)*: Kulasihan River on the eastern side of Sibuguey Bay between Olutanga Island and the head of the bay
    - *Balangingi*
    - *Daongdung (Sama Daongdong)*: Daongdong Island, off the southeast coast of Jolo Island
    - *Kabinga'an*

- *Tagtabun Balangingi'*:<sup>[4]</sup> Tagtabun Island, just east of Zamboanga City. Regular population of 300 as of 1972. Also called *bahasa bāngingi'* (*bāngingi'*, *a'a tagtabun*).
- *Tongquil Balangingi'*:<sup>[4]</sup> Tongquil Island in the Samales group, east of Jolo Island. 8,000 speakers. Also called *sama tongkil*.
- *Linungan*:<sup>[4]</sup> Linungan (Linongan) or Cocos Island, off the northeast coast of Basilan Island
- *Panigayan Balangingi'*:<sup>[4]</sup> Malamawi Island, just off the west coast of Basilan Island. Several hundred speakers. Also called *bahasa balangingi'* (*sama bāngingi'*).
- *Landang-Gua'*:<sup>[4]</sup> Sakol or Landang Island, just east of Zamboanga City, north of Tagtabun Island. Also called *a'a landang-gua'* ('Landang-Gua' people').
- *Mati*:<sup>[4]</sup> Mati, Davao Oriental, just east of the San Agustin Peninsula
- *Kawit Balangingi'*:<sup>[4]</sup> Kawit, 10 km west of Zamboanga City
- *Karundung*:<sup>[4]</sup> Karundung, on the southeast coast of Jolo Island
- *Pilas*:<sup>[4]</sup> Pilas Island|Pilas Group, 15 km west of Basilan Island

## ■ Central Sama

- *Sama Deya*
- *Sama Dilaut*: throughout Sulu, but especially in Zamboanga City, in Siasi, and in Sitangkai, south of Tawi-Tawi Island. 80,000 speakers in the Philippines. Also called *sama to'ongan* 'genuine Sama'; *sama pagūng* 'floating Sama'; *sama pala'u* 'boat-dwelling Sama'.
- *Sama Siasi*
- *Sama Laminusa*: Laminusa Island, just off the north coast of Siasi Island. 5,000 speakers.
- *Sama Tabawan*
- *Sama Kaulungan*:<sup>[4]</sup> Kaulungan Island, just off the eastern end of Basilan Island. At least 1,000 speakers.
- *Sama Musu'*:<sup>[4]</sup> south coast of Siasi Island. 3,000 speakers. Inter-marriage with Sama Dilaut. Also called *Sama Lipid* (Littoral Sama) by the Sama Dilaut (Sea Sama).
- *Sama Balimbing*:<sup>[4]</sup> Balimbing, on the east coast of Tawi-Tawi Island (listed as part of *Southern Sama* in Ethnologue)
- *Sama Bannaran*:<sup>[4]</sup> Bannaran Island, Sapa-Sapa, Tawi-Tawi.
- *Sama Bangaw-Bangaw*:<sup>[4]</sup> near Sandakan on the northeast coast of Sabah
- *South Ubian*:<sup>[4]</sup> South Ubian Island, east of the northeast end of Tawi-Tawi Island. Census figure of 27,000, including the population of Tandubas.

## ■ Southern Sama

- *Sibutu' (Sama Sibutu)*: Sibutu' Island, southwest of Bongao Island. About 10,000 speakers.
- *Simunul*: Simunul Island, south of Bongao Island. 10,000 speakers. Also called *sama səddopan*.
- *Tandubas (Tandu'-baas)*: Tandubas Island, just of the northeastern point of Tawi-Tawi Island. Census figure of 27,000, including the population of Tandubas. Also called *a'a tandu'-bās* 'people of Tandu-Bas', *a'a unguṣ matata* 'people of Ungus Matata'. The Sama of central Sulu call them *obian*, *ubian*, *sama s'ddopan* 'Southern Sama'.
- *Obian*
- *Bongao*
- *Sitangkai*

- Languyan
- Sapa-Sapa
- Sama Pahut:<sup>[4]</sup> Bongao Island. About 1,000 speakers.
- Sama Sampulna:<sup>[4]</sup> Semporna, east Sabah
- Berau, East Kalimantan about 46,000 speakers.
- **Mapun**: 43,000 in the Philippines; 15,000 Mapun people in Sabah, Malaysia (2011 SIL)
  - Mapun is spoken on Cagayan de Sulu (Mapun) island, Tawi-Tawi, Philippines.
    - 20,000 in Mapun island
    - 5,000 to 10,000 Mapun people in Palawan
- **Bajau West Coast Sabah**
  - Kota Belud
  - Tuaran
  - Kudat
- **Bajau Indonesia**
  - Gorontalo Torosiaje, Popayato, Pohuwato

## Distribution

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*Ethnologue* provides the following location information for various Sama languages.

**Northern Sama** is located in western Mindanao, the Sulu archipelago northeast of Jolo, Zamboanga coast peninsula and islands, and Basilan island.

- *Northern Sama* dialect: White Beach near Subic Bay, Luzon
- *Lutangan* dialect: Olutanga Island. Possibly also in Luzon and Palawan.

**Central Sama** is located in:

- Sulu and Tawi-Tawi provinces: Siasi, Tabawan, Bongao, Sitangkai, Cagayan de Sulu island
- Basilan Island: Maluso, Malamawi, Bohe' Lobbong
- Zamboanga del Sur Province: Rio Hondo, Batuan Lumbayaw, Taluk Sangay, [Sanggali
- Zamboanga del Norte Province: Olutanga
- Davao City: Isla Verde and Sasa
- Cagayan de Oro
- Cebu and Tagbilaran
- Puerto Princesa, Palawan
- Batangas

**Southern Sama** is located in Tawi-Tawi Island Province (in Tawi-Tawi, Simunul, Sibutu, and other major islands) and East Kalimantan (Berau)

**Pangutaran Sama** is spoken on Pangutaran Island, located to the west of Jolo; and in Cagayan de Tawi-Tawi, southern Palawan

**Yakan** is spoken in Basilan and small surrounding islands; Sakol island; and the eastern coast of Zamboanga. Yakan tends to be concentrated away from the coast.

**Inabaknon** is spoken on Capul Island, Northern Samar Province. Capul Island is located in the San Bernardino Strait, which separates Samar from the Bicol Peninsula of Luzon.

**Bajau West Coast Sabah** is spoken in Kota Belud, Kudat, and Tuaran which is on mutual intelligibility with Bajau East Coast of Sabah.

**Bajau Indonesia** is spoken on some part of Indonesia, Torosiaje island.

## Phonology

Sinama languages have 21 to 24 phonemes. All Sinama languages have 17 consonants. Each language has from 5 to 7 vowels.

### Consonants

The consonants of the Sinama languages are represented by the letters b, d, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, ng, p, r, s, t, w, y and '.

Representation of the glottal stop in Sinama has not yet reached a consensus among Sinama speakers. Linguists have suggested the use of an apostrophe like character (') for word final glottal stops. Central Sinama has adopted this for glottal stops in between vowels as well (i.e. a'a, the Sinama word for human). Other Sinama languages have chosen to follow Tagalog orthography and to leave this vowel medial glottal stop ambiguous. Sinama speakers often spell the word final glottal stop with an h at the end. Sinama speakers in Malaysia may also spell it with a k following the vowel softening patterns of Bahasa Melayu.

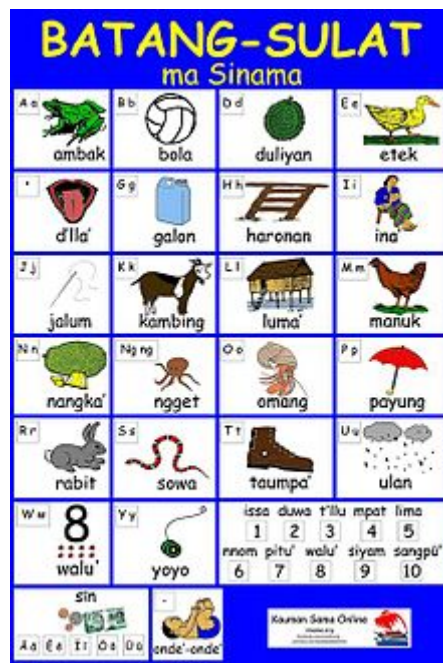
In certain dialects of Sinama *b* becomes  $\beta$  and *g* becomes  $\chi$  when found between two vowels.

### Vowels

The vowels a, e, i, o, u are found in all Sinama languages and dialects. In addition to these 5 vowels ə, and ʏ are found in one or more Sinama language.

	<u>a</u>	<u>e</u>	<u>i</u>	<u>o</u>	<u>u</u>	<u>ə</u>	<u>ʏ</u>
Northern <sup>[5]</sup>	a	e	i	o	u		
Central <sup>[6]</sup>	a	e	i	o	u	'	
Southern <sup>[7]</sup>	a	e	i	o	u		
Pangutaran <sup>[8]</sup>	a	e	i	o	u	'	ō
Jama Mapun <sup>[9]</sup>	a	e	i	o	u		

Many of the Sinama languages have contrastive vowel lengthening. This is represented by a macron over the vowel (āēīōū).



A reading poster for the Sinama language created by Kauman Sama Online for free use.



This woman making a traditional mat is a Sama from Siasi who now lives in Semporna, Malaysia.

## Stress

Sinama pronunciation is quite distinct from other nearby languages such as Tausug and Tagalog in that all of the Sinama languages primary stress occurs on the penultimate syllable of the word.<sup>[4]:124</sup> Stress will remain on the penultimate syllable even with the addition of suffixes including enclitic pronouns. In Northern Sinama (Balanguingi') the stress will shift to the ultima when the penult is the mid central vowel /ə/.

## Enclitic Pronouns

The 1st, 2nd, & 3rd singular pronouns *-ku*, *-nu* and *-na* respectively, the 1st plural inclusive pronouns *-ta* and *-tam*, as well as the 2nd plural pronoun *-bi* are all enclitics.<sup>[10]</sup> These enclitic pronouns change the pronunciation by shifting the stress of a word through the addition of a syllable; a verb or noun combined with a suffixed one syllable enclitic pronoun. Some Sinama orthographies represent this by writing both noun/verb and pronoun as one word e.g. *luma'ta* for "our house" in Central Sinama. Other orthographies represent this with a hyphen e.g. *luma'-ta* for "our house" in Southern Sinama. Still others write this keeping the noun/verb separate from the pronoun e.g. *luma' ta* for "our house" in Northern Sinama.

## Cultural references

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The lyrics of the song called *Kiriring Pakiriring* (popularly known as *Dayang Dayang*) were written in the Simunul dialect of the Southern Sinama language.

Central Sinama and Southern Sinama are 2 of 6 languages used in the 2012 Filipino drama film, *Thy Womb*.

Sinama is featured on the 1991 edition of the Philippine one thousand peso bill. Langgal is written under a picture of a Sama place of worship. Langgal is the Sinama for that place of worship.

## References

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